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The task of the present biographer, who is a grandson, is to describe the rich and active personality which was behind this wonderful sum of achievement. Private correspondence, the loving testimony of friends and relatives, and official records have been drawn upon for material, and the information discovered has been digested with care and arranged with a pleasing sense of proportion. The result, as may be expected, partakes somewhat of the apologetic, but it shows an honest intention to be truthful. It is hard for any man to write about Hamilton without being captivated by his genius: it is not to be expected that a relative should be aught but an admirer. We must not, therefore, be surprised to find warmest commendation for the opinions of Oliver, the Englishman, who has little appreciation for the purposes of such men as Jefferson and Gallatin, and who does not understand the native Americanism in the Republican party of the time. But all this we may forget in the faithful description of the man.

Dr. Hamilton, well known as an alienist of pre-eminent ability, proves himself a skilful narrator. His chapters deal with such subjects as Origin and Parentage; Courtship and Marriage; Hamilton as a Lawyer; As a Writer and Orator; Friends and Enemies; Building a Home; Family Life; Hamilton and Burr; and the Duel. There is also in a separate chapter a pleasing view of Mrs. Hamilton. The quotations from letters add a scholarly touch to the description and preserve the quaintness of the time in which they were written. They are not numerous enough to become wearisome, although the repetition of the prevalent epistolary affectation of style makes the reader glad no more are given. Hamilton's domestic life is the most persistent note in the volume, a wholesome picture of upper-class family happiness. The chapters on Burr and the duel are perhaps the most impressive. They describe this tragic affair not fully but with effect. Dr. Hamilton does not think it worth while to interrupt the story to explain the bearing of the New York election of 1804 on the duel. Was it because that election had a connection with the projects of the Essex Junto? On all the points which have been cited with most telling effect against Hamilton the book is mostly silent. It is not critical, or philosophical, but only a very appreciative presentation of the man's human side, sometimes diffuse and sometimes incomplete, but on the whole satisfying and creditable.

JOHN S. BASSETT.

The National Land System, 1785-1820. By PAYSON JACKSON TREAT, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History, Leland Stanford Junior University. (New York: E. B. Treat and Company. 1910. Pp. xii, 486.)

FEW attempts have been made to put into compact form a history of the American federal land system. Donaldson's encyclopaedic *Public Domain* is an excellent reference work but not attractive reading. Sato's *History of the Land Question in the United States* is little more than a

sketch of the legislative aspects of the subject. These works purport to cover the fields; other writers have contributed a large number of monographs, chapters, and paragraphs, many of which are excellent. Dr. Treat has undertaken to tell in one story the history of legislation and the operation of the laws. On the main he has done the work painstakingly and well, and it will prove of great aid to teachers of social and economic history and of interest to a larger circle of readers.

The first seven chapters show a clear and logical arrangement of subject-matter. Beginning with the Origin of the Public Domain the author sketches the claims of the new states to western territory and the surrender of these claims to the central government. In chapter II. he discusses the Origin of the Federal Land System. This is one of the best chapters of the book. There is brought together in brief space all that will frequently be wanted on the genesis of the land system. However, the statement on page 35: "The delegates from the South, therefore, sought to amend the clause which provided that the land could only be sold by townships; they would make it possible for settlers to purchase smaller amounts wherever they desired." And again on page 36: "But the Southerners grasped better the spirit of the westward movement, and in insisting upon the sale of small tracts they pointed out the development of the land system for the next fifty years"—these statements give an impression which would hardly prepare the reader for an understanding of the votes repeatedly taken on size of tracts, in which the Southern members consistently and persistently voted against reductions. There is no mystery in the case; they voted for smaller tracts than townships because the townships were too large for plantations; they voted against the quarter-section and eighty-acre tracts, because they were too small for the planter, but gave the independent farmer a chance to buy so as to interfere with a thousand-acre purchase. On the other hand, the New Englander, who wanted from the start to use his township system, was early converted to the point of view of the pioneer north of the Ohio. The votes on the land question reflect the different interests of the small farmer of the North and the planter of the South. The better grasping of the spirit of the West by the Southerner must be taken to apply to a point of time, or treated with an undue portion of savoring.

The last half of the book shows a distinct lack of unity as compared to the first. The System of Surveys is a fairly familiar topic, and information on it easy of access, yet twenty pages are devoted to its elucidation. A little further treatment in chapter IV. where a sketch of surveys is given, would have been more logical and have satisfied all requirements. It seems like happening upon an introductory chapter in the middle of a story to find this detailed part of the setting well on in the plot. But the author finds his red thread again in the discussion of land grants, which he handles logically and interestingly.

The last chapter, The Early Land System and the Westward Move-

ment, is in the nature of a concluding essay and gives the author's interpretation of the results of the land policy in connection with the peopling of the West.

Such topics as "speculation", "squatters", and "pre-emption" are treated incidentally, sometimes well, sometimes not so well. On the whole the reader will be likely to get a good idea of the force of the West in these matters though mainly from the author's statements rather than from evidence presented.

Mechanically the book is attractive but far from perfect. Probably the usefulness is not impaired by the statement that "Bancroft" will be referred to as "Ban." and "Miscellaneous" as "Misc.", though the device is not always followed, but not so much can be said for the errors in citations. Out of some half-dozen references, which the writer had occasion to use, two were found to be wrong. The reference to the *Annals* on page 67 should read 429, and on page 373, note 2, 469, in place of 629 and 409 respectively.

The bibliography is well selected and the index good. Altogether the book is an acceptable contribution on an important subject.

BENJAMIN HORACE HIBBARD.

A History of the People of the United States, from the Revolution to the Civil War. By JOHN BACH McMASTER, University of Pennsylvania. Volume VII., 1841-1850. (New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1910. Pp. xxii, 641.)

IN the decade covered by this volume the sentiment for national expansion converted the demand for slavery extension into a pivot around which all the other questions at issue, political, social, and ecclesiastical, began to revolve. In the Mexican War the slave power won its greatest victory and laid the mine that wrought its own destruction. With due appreciation of the meaning of that critical struggle for territorial expansion the author devotes to it more than half of this book.

The first two chapters, however, describe the final results of the financial panic that overthrew Van Buren in 1840. These chapters should be read with chapters LXV., LXVIII., and LXX., in volume VI. They tell the story of hard times, "shinplaster currencies", riots against banks and brokers, and the progress of bankruptcy and repudiation on the part of eight states of the Union, until the tariff of 1842 opened a new chapter of economic history.

In the chapters, four in number, depicting social conditions in all parts of the country during the forties, Professor McMaster reveals his best gifts. He is not a painter of portraits, but he is skilful in depicting the panorama of a nation or a generation. The picture here unrolled is a rich one: the beginnings of cheap newspapers and of the telegraph, the queer delusions and extraordinary growth of Millerism and still more of Mormonism, the influence of slavery upon Southern society, the various efforts for social and political betterment from Fourierism and